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CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

10   1.   A method for linking a plurality of financial records to create a group, the financial records corresponding to a plurality of accounts spanning a plurality of products, comprising the steps of:

providing a primary owner for the group;

providing a dependent financial record corresponding to a
15 dependent account, the dependent financial record having a dependent strategy for controlling group processing options for the dependent account;

providing group master data that is associated with the group to facilitate group processing, the group master data including a
20 group identifier, group control settings, and group aggregate data; and

linking the primary owner and the dependent financial record through the group master data to support group processing while retaining independent processing of the dependent account.

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2.   The method of Claim 1, further comprising the step of:

providing a key financial record corresponding to a key account that is associated with the primary owner and is distinct from the group master data.

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3.   The method of Claim 2, wherein the key financial record is linked to the group master data via a predefined relationship.

4. The method of Claim 1, further comprising the steps of:

providing a second dependent financial record corresponding to a second dependent account, the second dependent financial record having a second dependent strategy for controlling group processing options for the second dependent account; and

adding the second dependent account to the group by linking the second dependent financial record through the group master data to support group processing while retaining independent processing of the second dependent account.

5. The method of Claim 4, wherein the dependent account corresponds to one product and the second dependent account corresponds to another product.

6. The method of Claim 4, wherein the dependent strategy and the second dependent strategy are independent of one another.

7. A method for linking a plurality of financial records corresponding to a plurality of accounts to create a group to facilitate group level processing while maintaining independent processing of each account, comprising the steps of:

provision a primary owner for the group;

providing group master data for the group;

linking a first dependent account to the group by linking a first dependent financial record to the group master data using a first set of parameters that specify the first dependent account's relationship to the group; and

linking a second dependent account to the group by linking a second dependent financial record to the group master data through a second set of parameters that specify the second dependent account's relationship to the group, wherein the first dependent account and the second dependent account are different types of products.

8. The method of Claim 7, wherein the first dependent account's relationship to the group is independent of the second dependent account's relationship to the group.

9. The method of Claim 7, wherein the group master data includes a group identifier, group control settings, and group aggregate data.

10. The method of Claim 7, wherein the first set of parameters defines a first set of group processing options.

11. The method of Claim 10, wherein a first authorization option specifies how a transaction directed to the first dependent account is authorized.

12.   The method of Claim 7, further comprising the step of:

deleting the first dependent account from the group by delinking the first dependent financial record from the group master data, wherein the deletion of the first dependent account does not affect the second dependent account.

13.   The method of Claim 7, wherein the first dependent account corresponds to a general use card and the second dependent account corresponds to a private label card.

14. A method for creating a group of accounts that span a plurality of products, comprising the steps of:

providing a financial record for each account;

providing a set of group processing options for each account;

providing group master data for the group; and

linking the financial records through the group master data to support group processing while retaining independent processing of the accounts.

15. The method of Claim 14, wherein one of the accounts is a dependent account, and wherein the set of group processing options for the dependent account is a dependent strategy.

16. The method of Claim 14, further comprising the step of:

providing a primary owner for the group.

17. The method of Claim 16, wherein one of the accounts is a key account, and wherein the key account corresponds to the primary owner.

18. The method of Claim 14, wherein the group master data includes a group identifier, group control settings, and group aggregate data.

19. The method of Claim 18, wherein each financial record is associated with the group identifier.

20. The method of Claim 14, wherein the group master data includes account history for each account in the group.

21. A method for creating a group comprising a plurality of accounts to support group level processing while maintaining independent processing of the accounts, comprising the steps of:

designating a first account as a key account by setting a relationship parameter for the first account to key;

determining whether the key account satisfies a set of business rules;

if the key account satisfies the set of business rules, then creating group master data;

designating a second account as a dependent account by setting a relationship parameter for the second account to dependent;

selecting a dependent strategy for the dependent account to define the relationship between the dependent account and the group;

determining whether the dependent account satisfies the set of business rules; and

if the dependent account satisfies the set of business rules, then updating the group master data with information about the dependent account.

22. The method of Claim 21, wherein the group master data includes a group identifier, group control settings, and group aggregate data.

23. The method of Claim 21, wherein the dependent strategy defines group processing options for the dependent account.

24. The method of Claim 21, further comprising the steps of:

providing a key financial record corresponding to the key account;

providing a set of financial records for the group master data; and

providing a dependent financial record for the dependent account.